

REMARKS

Claims 1-21, 24-27, and 39-34 are pending in the application. In an Office Action mailed February 10, 2004, Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Claims 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims 14-21, 24-27, and 29-34 were allowed. Finally, Claims 6-13 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the notice of allowable and allowed subject matter.

Claim 1 has been amended above to clarify the invention. Further, Claim 6, indicated as containing allowable subject matter, incorporates the limitation of amended Claim 1 (as amended in a April 10, 2000 response to Office Action) and is rewritten as new independent Claim 35. Accordingly, new independent Claim 35 should be deemed allowable.

During a telephone conference on July 12, 2004, several items were discussed. First, it was noted that independent Claim 26 has been inadvertently dropped from those claims indicated as allowable. Further, new Claim 35 was also discussed. Finally, the above amendment to Claim 1 was proposed and accepted as placing Claim 1 into condition for allowance. Applicant's attorney thanks Examiner Phan for his time during this telephone conference.

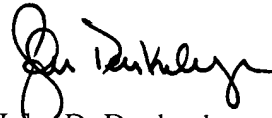
In view of the above, and agreements during the July 12, 2004, telephone conference, applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-21, 24-27, and 29-35 are all in condition for allowance.

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The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned with any remaining issues regarding this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service in a sealed envelope as first class mail with postage thereon fully prepaid and addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the below date.

Date: July 12, 2004

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